

PART IV

The Pattern of Agriculture

Farms: Number and Size:

The great majority of farms in Garfield County are units of medium and large size. The biggest class is large farms with over 1,000 acres each. The Census of Agriculture reported 300 farms in the county in 1954, with 116 classed as large farms. This was a decline of 20 units since 1950 and follows a continuous decline since 1945. The average size of farm reached a new peak in 1954 of 1,163 acres, the fifth highest in the state. The total land in farms reached 348,900 acres. This was the highest since the peak year of 1940 with 379,700 acres.

As a general trend, farm holdings have become larger over time as the number of farms decreased and the land in farms increased. In 1900 there were 521 farms in Garfield County compared with the 300 units reported in 1954. About three-fourths of the farm land is in the 116 large farms. Only 20 farms in the county contained less than 100 acres in 1954. These small farms have been disappearing at a fast rate in recent years. While the number of large farms has decreased, also, the total acreage in large farms increased about 10,000 acres between 1950 and 1954. The size of farm has resulted from large scale dryland farming and land acquisition methods.

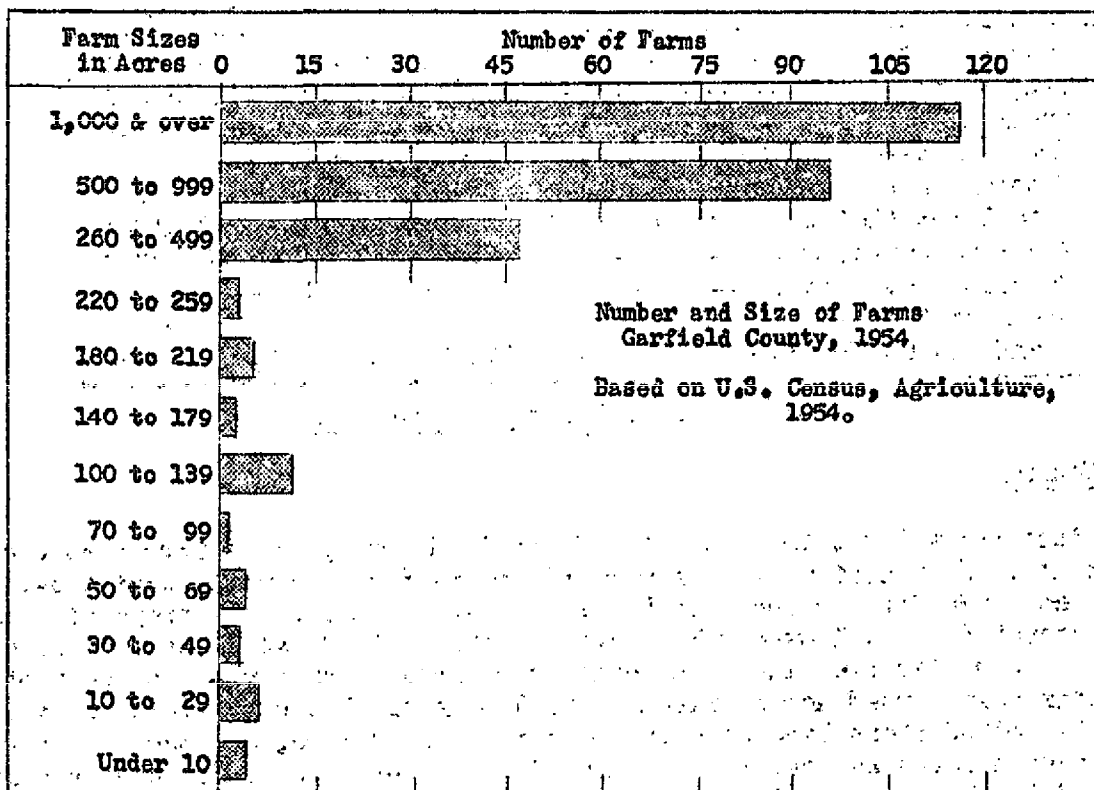


Figure 8.- Number and Size of Garfield County Farms, 1954.

Table 10.- Farms, Number and Average Size, Land in Farms
Garfield County, 1900-1954

Year	Total Farms in County	Total County area in farms (acres)	Average size of farms in the county (acres)	Percent of County area in farms
1900	521	257,826	494.8	56.4
1910	504	314,609	624.2	68.8
1920	413	314,182	760.7	68.7
1925	440	352,347	800.8	77.1
1930	393	357,086	908.6	78.1
1940	335	379,693	1,133.4	83.1
1945	369	344,096	932.5	75.3
1950	320	342,791	1,071.2	75.0
1954	300	348,869	1,162.9	76.3

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

Table 11.- Large Farms: Number and General Land Use
Garfield County, 1954

Land Utilization on Large Farms	Farms 1,000 to 4,999 acres	Farms 5,000 acres and over
Number of farms-----	111 farms	5 farms
Land in farms-----	214,614 acres	42,943 acres
Cropland harvested-----	65,320 acres	9,563 acres
Cropland used only for pasture--	2,693 acres	--
Cropland not harvested and not pastured (idle, fallow land)	48,655 acres	8,250 acres
Woodland pastured-----	6,641 acres	300 acres
Woodland not pastured-----	2,443 acres	--
Other pasture (not cropland and not woodland)-----	87,042 acres	24,697 acres

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

Farm Tenure

Since about 1930, the majority of Garfield County farms have been operated by tenants. In recent years the percentage has declined with about two-fifths of the county's farms being operated by tenants in 1954. The proportion of farms operated by full owners has remained about steady at 28 percent since 1945. This varies from the state pattern of farm ownership--75 percent of all the farms being owned and operated by full owners. The percentage of part-time farms (a method where land or parts of a farm are rented, although the renter still owns a farm) has remained steady with three-tenths of the county's farms operated in this manner since 1945. Managers have never been numerous and the number of farms operated by managers has remained almost constant since 1940. During the 1930's managers were more numerous than at any other period. Tenants and full owners have declined in importance over the years while part ownership

increased during recent years. Tenants still harvest the most cropland followed by part owners, full owners and managers in order of importance.

Table 12.- Farm Tenancy, Number and Percent of Farms
By Tenure of Operator, Garfield County
1925-1954

Year	Number Farms in County	Full Owners		Part Owners		Managers		Tenants	
		number of farms	percent of all farms	number of farms	percent of all farms	number of farms	percent of all farms	number of farms	percent of all farms
1925	440	171	38.9	108	24.5	2	.5	159	36.1
1930	393	109	27.7	114	29.0	5	1.3	165	42.0
1935	417	127	30.5	104	24.9	6	1.4	180	43.2
1940	335	111	33.1	99	29.6	3	.9	122	36.4
1945	369	105	28.5	93	25.2	2	.5	169	45.8
1950	320	86	26.9	95	29.7	3	.9	136	42.5
1954	300	85	28.3	98	29.3	2	.7	125	41.7

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

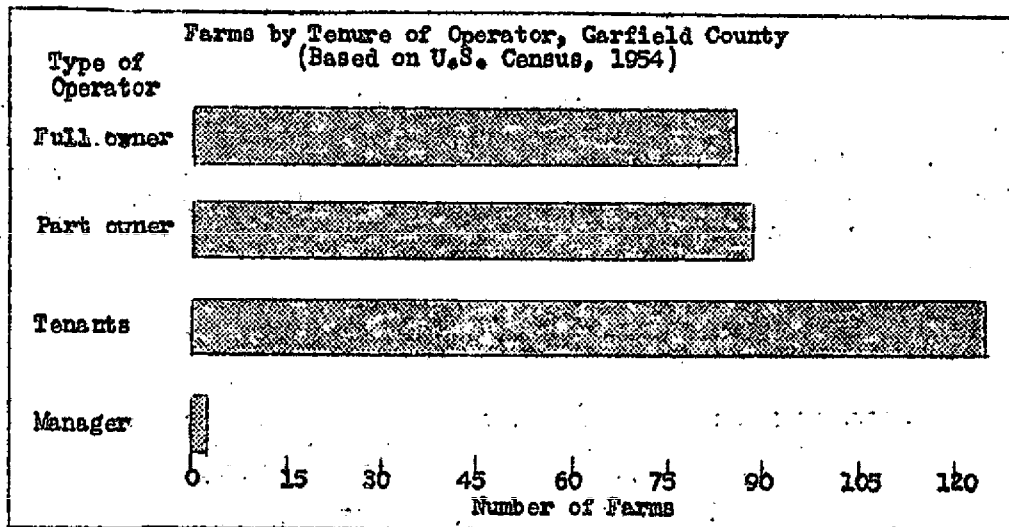


Figure 9.- Farms by Tenure of Operator, Garfield County, 1954

Types of Farms

Garfield agriculture is not greatly diversified. Over four-fifths of the county's farms are cash grain farms. Cash grain (wheat and barley) farms numbered 227 in 1954. There were 17 farms classed as general farms that specialized in crops and livestock. Livestock other than dairy and poultry were the main source of income on 10 other farms. In addition, there were 5 dairy and 5 poultry farms enumerated in the 1954 Census. One farm was classed as a vegetable farm. Eleven others were miscellaneous or unclassified. There were decreases in all specialties between 1945 and 1954 except for cash grain farming, which gained 8 farms. One vegetable farm was also reported in 1949. As smaller farms have been combined, diversification has decreased.

Table 13.- Types of Farms, Garfield County, 1954

Type of Farms	Number of Farms	Percent of all farms in the county
Total farms in county.....	276	
Field-crop farms.....	227	
Cash-grain.....	227	82.0
Other field crop.....	0	
Vegetable farms.....	1	.4
Fruit-and-nut farms.....	0	
Dairy farms.....	3	1.9
Poultry farms.....	3	1.9
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry	10	3.6
General farms.....	17	
Primarily crop.....	0	
Primarily livestock.....	0	
Crop and livestock.....	17	6.2
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms.....	21	4.0

Source: U. S. Census, AgricultureFarm Values

Since 1950 the value of farm land and buildings has increased by 30 percent in Garfield County. Farm real estate and property was at its lowest level around 1940 when the average was only \$25 per acre. The average value per farm and per acre was four times greater in 1950 than during 1940. Since 1940, land price increases have followed a general trend of increased value of farm real estate.

Table 14.- Value of Farm Property
Garfield County, 1920-1954

Year	Total Value All Farm Property in County	County Average Values	
		Per Farm (dollars)	Per Acre (dollars)
1920	\$19,974,341	\$ 43,245	\$ 56.85
1930	15,258,487	38,826	42.73
1940	9,628,627	28,742	25.36
1950	28,597,120	89,366	80.99
1954	36,879,600	122,932	102.74

Source: U. S. Census, AgricultureFarm Land Utilization

Dryland pasture was the single largest land use on Garfield County farms, accounting for 132,400 acres--38 percent of the total. This is typical of this region of the state. The second largest use was cropland which totaled 113,000 acres, or about one-third of the land in farms. Idle cropland including summer fallow represents the third largest land use. In 1954, there were 82,600 acres

used in this manner. Woodlands on farms total almost 12,000 acres in the county. About 8,400 acres of woodlands were pastured in 1954 while 3,400 acres were not pastured. Cropland used only for pasture accounted for 6,200 acres or about 2 percent of the land in farms. There were 700 acres of improved pasture in 1954. Cropland harvested has increased much more than land in farms since 1949. An increase of about 16,000 acres in harvested cropland occurred between 1949 and 1954. This was an increase of one-sixth in the total. The acreage devoted to other land uses, with the exception of woodlands, decreased during this period.

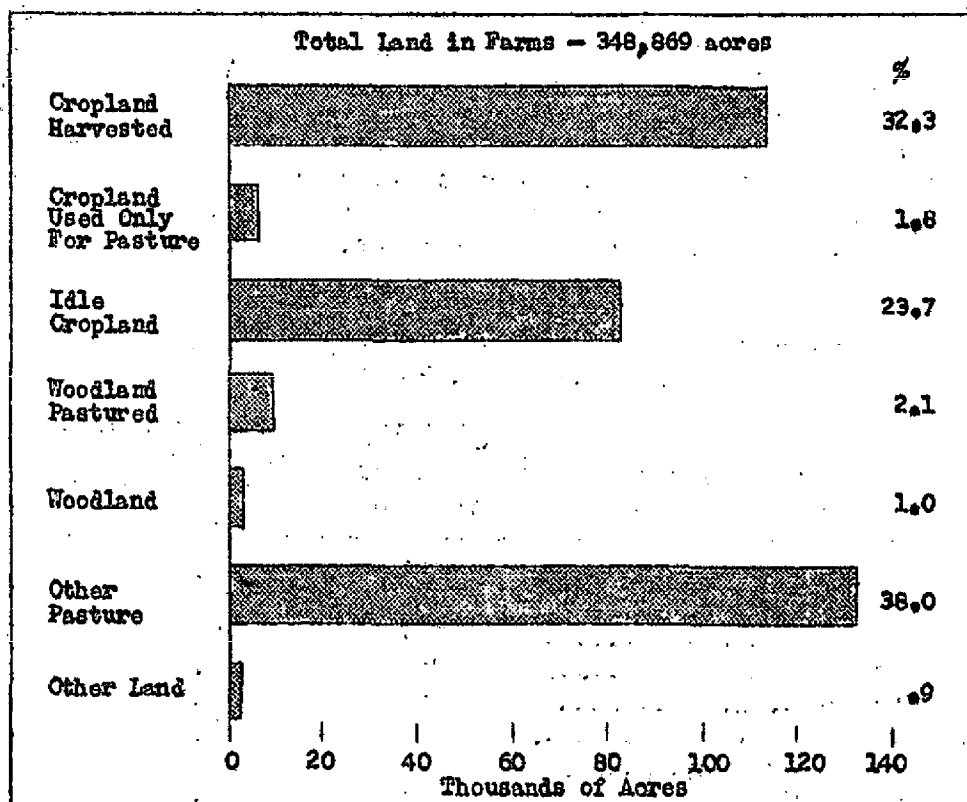


Figure 10.- Utilization of Farmland in Garfield County, 1954

Farm Residence and Operation

During 1954 one out of every four Garfield County farmers worked off their farms on a part-time basis. About 7 percent of Garfield County farmers worked off the farm 100 days or more. Slightly over 7 percent, or 22 farmers in all, earned more from this nonfarm employment than they did from the sales of products off their lands. Seasonal work on other farms and various town jobs provided the most opportunities for off-farm work. Cash crops grown on most of the farms leave farmers idle time during parts of the year.

The Census of 1954 also showed that 36 of the county's farmers did not live on the farm that they operated. This was one out of every eight farmers in the county. In many cases, farm operators live in town removed from the wheat or livestock farm which they operate in a remote county area.

Farm Facilities

In 1954 Garfield County farm homes and farm operations were much better equipped with household conveniences and labor-saving devices than in earlier Census periods. About nine out of every ten farms had electricity, while almost as many had telephones. Washington State averages for these facilities on farms were 97 and 74 percent, respectively. Almost two-thirds had home freezers and over one-third had a television set. About nine-tenths of the farm places also had piped running water.

Garfield County is well-mechanized for field crop farming. Nearly all farms have tractors, motortrucks and automobiles. In degree of mechanization in the general state picture, the county ranks fourteenth in the state in number of grain combines. About one-quarter of the county's farms had power feed grinders. Only 15 farms had pick-up hay balers and field forage harvesters. Almost as many had an electric pig brooder. Also one out of every ten had a milking machine. The largest new investments and additions in equipment since 1950 have come in grain combines, pick-up hay balers and home freezers.

Table 15.- Specified Facilities and Equipment on Farms
Garfield County, 1954

Facility or Equipment Item	Number of Farms Using	Percent of All Farms in County Equipped
Telephone.....	262	87.3
Electricity.....	270	90.0
Television set.....	107	35.7
Piped running water.....	263	87.7
Home freezer.....	195	65.0
Electric pig brooder.....	14	4.7
Power feed grinder.....	72	24.0
Milking machine.....	28	9.3
Grain combines.....	190	63.3
Corn pickers.....	—	—
Pick-up balers.....	15	5.0
Field forage harvesters.....	15	5.0
Artificial ponds, reservoirs and earth tanks.....	22	7.3
Motortrucks.....	253	84.3
Tractors.....	249	83.0
Automobiles.....	267	89.0

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture

Irrigation and Facilities

Irrigation is not important in the overall picture of agriculture in Garfield County. There were 42 farms that irrigated crops or pasture in 1954. Only six of these irrigated all of their cropland. These farms irrigated 232 acres during 1954. The total irrigated cropland in the county was 1,400 acres.

This was a 50 percent increase in irrigated acreage over 1950. The average farm using irrigation contained about 2,030 acres.

Irrigation facilities in the county are privately owned. There were 22 farms with artificial ponds, reservoirs and earth tanks. Many of the systems employ sprinkler irrigation although gravity systems are also popular.

Because of a dry summer climate, irrigation is necessary for some crops. Alfalfa for hay was the leading crop irrigated with 770 acres. Sugar beets accounted for 190 acres. Most of the remainder of the irrigated cropland was divided among the small grains. Seventeen farms reported irrigating a total of 270 acres of pasture during 1954.

Table 16.- Irrigated Farms: Number and Acreage
Garfield County, 1950 and 1954

Item	1950	1954
Number of irrigated farms.....	32	42
Land irrigated.....	934 acres	1,409 acres
Irrigated land in farms according to use:		
Farms irrigating crops.....	31	32
Farms irrigating pasture.....	3	17
Acres of crops irrigated.....	919	1,140
Acres of pasture irrigated.....	15	269

Source: U. S. Census, Agriculture